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**Subject:** Bloomberg News Service (5-11) EPA Says Water Near Pennsylvania Frack Site Safe to Drink

# EPA Says Water Near Pennsylvania Frack Site Safe to Drink

By Mark Drajem on May 11, 2012

Tests of water wells in Dimock, Pennsylvania, found none with unsafe levels of contamination tied to hydraulic fracturing, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said after a final round of testing.

The agency, responding to complaints from homeowners about murky water and water that could be ignited, tested 61 wells. In results released today, it found none of the wells had contamination exceeding federal safe drinking-water standards. Results at one home had elevated levels of methane, according to the agency, which doesn't set maximum limits for the gas.

The EPA, which completed four rounds of tests in Dimock, said it will re-test four wells where earlier results had found contaminants that were a health risk.

Dimock, where actor Mark Ruffalo delivered bottled water to residents last year, has become a closely watched community after residents said water was harmed by nearby fracturing, or fracking, by Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. (COG) ([COG](#)) In fracking, water, sand and chemicals are injected into deep shale formations to crack the rock and free trapped natural gas.

"Cabot is pleased that EPA has now reached the same conclusion of Cabot and state and local authorities resulting from the collection of more than 10,000 pages of hard data -- that the water in Dimock meets all regulatory standards," George Stark, a company spokesman, said in an e-mail. Contaminants found in the water occur naturally and are not tied to gas drilling, he said.

## Methane Levels

Results from the first 11 wells the EPA tested found one with a methane level of 52 parts per million, which could be explosive, and at least three where methane exceeded the state standard of 7 parts per million. The agency says methane doesn't impair the smell, taste or color of water, and the U.S. doesn't set a limit on the gas's levels.

Methane, the key constituent of natural gas, and fracking gained prominence after a scene in the Academy Award-nominated documentary "Gasland" in which a resident near a gas-drilling site in Colorado ignited the water coming out of a tap. State officials later issued a report saying that the gas was not linked to drilling.

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